

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;
and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*
—DANIEL 12: 3.

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FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION.

FAITH is, as a rule, held to be equivalent in signification to the word "belief," and, if we look to the etymology of the two words, I think properly so.

Our English version of the New Testament being only a translation, we must go to the original Greek to discover what was the word used by the inspired writers for "faith." The Greek word is *pistis*, which comes from the obsolete *pitha*, and probably *pio* and *peo*, signifying to tie, or to fasten, (Dr. J. P. Smith's Theology, appendix to Book V., chap. 5, sec. 3), and so to hold fast; or, when applied to actions of the mind, to trust or rely on, to have confidence in.

The word "belief" is said to be derived from the old German *beglauben*, which is from the Celtic *law*, meaning the hand, Welsh *llaw*; the radical idea being, "grasping with the hand, or laying hold of," (Dr. J. P. Smith's Theology, appendix to Book V, chap. 5, sec. 3). It is worthy of note that the symbol of "public faith" is usually denoted by two hands grasping each other.

This faith, or act of believing, is a very complex action, or series of actions of the mind, and is used to denote our assent to any truth, and our conviction of such truth.

We must be careful to distinguish it from the following:

- (1.) Indifference, which is a careless state of the mind, which cannot so properly be said to believe, as not to disbelieve, one which does not deem the subject worthy of serious consideration. (J. P. Smith's Theology, p. 581).
- (2.) Opinion, or the judgment that the mind forms, of any proposition, for the truth or falsehood of which there is not sufficient evidence to produce absolute belief. (Maunder's Scientific and Literary Treasury).

(3.) Presumption, that which is believed in the absence of direct evidence to the contrary, (Storehouse of General Information), a belief that is derived from circumstances surrounding a fact, but of which fact there is no positive proof.

The sense which this principle of faith occupies in scripture is one of confidence and implicit trust, and is something much more than a simple assent of the mind to the truth of Christian doctrine. The latter is the belief the devils possess, of which we read in James 2: 19, that they "believe, and tremble," but they cannot possess the former, which in scriptural phraseology denotes a "saving faith." The Bible gives us but one formal definition of faith, and that is in Heb. 11: 1, where it is described as follows: "Faith is the substance" (the ground or the confidence) "of things hoped for, the evidence" (conviction or assurance) "of things not seen." Its nature is nowhere clearly described, but the scriptures are full of the ways in which this Christian grace has been properly exercised, and, if we carefully examine those instances, we shall see, that not only a dependence on testimony, but a firm and complete trust, has always been included in the exercise of that faith. "Faith is an assured resting of the soul upon God's promises of mercy in Christ Jesus for pardon of sins here, and glory hereafter." (Dr. Owen's Catechism).

This true and genuine faith differs materially from what may be termed "educational" faith. Educational faith cannot purify the heart and will not enable its possessor to overcome the enticements of the world. It may assent to the mere external forms of sound doctrine, but there will be no sense of the divine duty and holy excellence of the doctrine itself. It cannot beget a new nature, or a living principle, nor can there be any active belief in the truth. True faith is characterized by its effects, for when the beauty of holiness, and the hideousness of real evil, is discovered, hatred of sin, and a forsaking of it follow, together with a self-renunciation, and a submission to the laws and ordinances of God, and a full and entire credence to every part of His testimony.

So that we may obtain this true faith, we must have some ground or evidence, in order to enable us to place credit on the saving grace of the Gospel, and what is this ground or evidence? "The grounds of any rational faith are, that the things revealed are not contrary to reason, that the revealer is well acquainted with the things he reveals, and that he is above all suspicion of deceiving us; and a saving or justifying faith signifies perfect confidence in the truth of the Gospel, which influences the will, and leads to an entire reliance on Christ for salvation. (Maunder's Scientific and Literary Treasury).

The evidence which makes us believe, is the perception of the excellency and beauty of divine truths; it is the conviction that the provisions of the Gospel fully and adequately supply the needs of the soul, it is the realization of man's utter inability to save himself, and of the necessity of Divine assistance to save him from the consequences of his sins. Faith, we are told, comes by hearing, and when the Gospel is heard, the awakened soul sees its perfection and glory, and gazes into its attractive beauty, and realizes that it is indeed the testimony of God, who cannot lie, and that he

has not before him a myth, or artfully devised fable, but that he has at hand that very remedy which is exactly suited to his needs. He believes with his whole heart, and "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." (Dr. J. Pye Smith's *Christian Theology*, p. 582).

St. Paul tells us that we are justified by faith, so it is necessary for us to understand what the word "justification," as used in scripture means. Does it mean "to make righteous," or "to account as righteous?" The scriptures always speak of justification as a change of state, and they describe the previous condition of the person as guilty, condemned, and under the judicial wrath of God. (John 5: 24, Rom. 5: 1, I Cor. 6: 11, Eph. 2: 1-3, Col. 1: 21, Titus 3: 3-7). In the Old Testament, the general sense of justification is admittedly "to be considered or accounted as righteous." Nowhere does it seem to mean that the justified person has become righteous in himself. David asserts that man is everywhere guilty, for he writes as follows: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified," (Psalm 143: 2); and we learn from Proverbs that "he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord," (Proverbs 17: 15), and again Isaiah pronounces a woe upon them that "justify the wicked," (Isaiah 5: 23).

To be justified therefore would seem to mean, to be accounted righteous, and to be treated as such, and it involves not only pardon, but acceptance with God, the being brought into His family, and having an access into the presence of a reconciled Father. The justification of a sinner is a judicial act of God, by which He pardons all the sins of the sinner, and regards him as the fit object of complacency and reward. (Smith's *Christian Theology* p. 585). He looks on him as free from blame, and deserving of approbation. Bishop Tomline says, "Justification, in the language of Scripture, signifies the being accounted just or righteous in the sight of God; or the being placed in a state of salvation." Quoting Mr. Veneer, he adds the following: "When God justifies a man, it is by forgiving him his trespasses, and accepting, esteeming, and rewarding him as a righteous person, although he is not really and strictly such. To justify, in the common spiritual notion of it, is to absolve from guilt, to discharge from punishment." (Tomline's *Theology*, p. 453).

Justification is not unfrequently confounded in the mind with salvation, whereas in the scriptures, justification seems to be spoken of as taking place in this life, and salvation is mentioned as an event of the future, that is in the life to come: as in the following passage, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be "saved from wrath through him." (Romans 5: 9).

The question is, How can God, who is eminently just as well as merciful, justify a sinner by imputing righteousness to him? I should not be surprised to hear that this question had been asked in the days of St. Paul, for it would seem that he had given an answer to it when he wrote the following: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission

of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3: 24, 25, 28). Thus the guilt of sin was imputed, on the one side, to Jesus Christ when He died on the cross for mankind, and, on the other, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner who believes. St. Paul again writes, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," (II Cor. 5: 21). He also in writing to the Philippians, says, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," (Phil. 3: 9). Thus an entrance into a state of justification cannot be due to any works, virtues, merits, penances, or satisfactions that men may perform; and St. Paul further tells us, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. 5: 1); so that it is through the instrumentality of faith, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. We have already seen what the nature of this faith is that justifies, namely a sincere, active, trusting faith, which receives completely, and rests upon the testimony of the scriptures concerning the Lord Jesus Christ as a divine and complete Savior, a faith that fills the heart with gratitude, and with a desire to serve and obey so merciful and glorious a Savior.

While dealing with the doctrine of justification as taught by St. Paul, I have not overlooked the fact that St. James teaches a doctrine, which, at first sight, would seem to be inconsistent with, and to militate against it. St. Paul says that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law, (Rom. 3: 28), while St. James writes that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only (James 2: 24). Now, in writing as they have done, we must suppose that they each had some special object in view, and I shall attempt to show that these seemingly contradictory assertions can easily be reconciled, and that in reality there is no difference in the teachings of these two divinely inspired men.

In considering this subject, we must not omit to distinguish between the first entrance into a state of justification, and the continuance therein, because a man can be in a state of justification by grace (as St. Paul tells us in Rom. 3: 24), and yet subsequently fall from that state of grace (Heb. 12: 15), and do despite to the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10: 29).

Then we must look to the context, and try and see why each of these writers taught the doctrine of justification that they did. St. Paul, when writing to the Galatians in A. D. 52 or 53, was clearly arguing against a certain Judaizing teacher or certain Judaizing teachers, who had insisted that circumcision, according to the Mosaic ritual, was required in Gentiles who had adopted the Christian religion, as being necessary to justification (Col. 6: 12); and it is evident from his arguments, that he had in his mind the first entrance of a convert into a state of justification. In addressing the Galatians, he tells them in chap. 1: 6, 7, that he marvelled that they were so soon removed from Him who had called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, and he points out to them that there were

some who were trying to trouble them, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ; and it will be seen that he commences his 3rd chapter by telling them that they had been bewitched; and then he goes on to ask them if they had received the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith. The deeds or works of the law, which St. Paul rejects in this doctrine of justification, are all those outward Mosaic ceremonies which the law of old prescribed, but which had been abolished by the new covenant of the Gospel. When St. Paul wrote to the Romans that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, (Rom. 3: 28), he was evidently alluding to that Mosaic law with all its outward ordinances, which the Judaizing Christians were trying to impose upon the Gentile converts, and not to that higher law of the Gospel, which inculcates righteousness, obedience, and good works. Doubtless soon after this, evil men began to pervert even this clear doctrine of St. Paul, interpreting it to mean that faith in Christ, without any deeds or acts, without even the practice of moral virtues, sufficed to obtain salvation.

It is evidently this perversion of the obvious sense of St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, that St. James deprecates when he points out, in his epistle written in A. D. 61, that a man is justified by works and not by faith only. He does not contradict in any sense the teaching of St. Paul, for he does not say that a man is justified by the "deeds of the law," but he says that a man is justified by "works of righteousness;" so that his teaching, so far from being inconsistent with that of St. Paul, constitutes its natural supplement. His teaching was to the effect that a faith which was one of the head only and not of the heart, was but a dead and useless faith, while on the other hand, an active principle, operating on the whole nature of man, would lead him to obey the precepts of the Gospel, and to work works of righteousness; and that a faith such as this was the only one that justified. St. James taught, as clearly as did St. Paul, that we are justified by faith and by the grace of God, but his evident object was to show that the teachings of St. Paul had been so perverted, as to lead to the bare and erroneous belief, that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was in itself sufficient to justify a sinner without the practice of any further moral obligations whatever. He was, it must be remembered, dealing with justification from a somewhat different standpoint to that taken by St. Paul, for, while the latter was evidently explaining what were the conditions that were required to place a man in a state of justification, St. James was showing what were the conditions required to keep and continue a man in that state. St. Paul taught that a person, by the action of a true and saving faith, enters into a state of justification without having to observe the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, while his co-laborer St. James explained that a person who had thus been justified, could not possibly continue in that state of justification unless he was careful to observe the moral precepts of the Gospel. St. Paul, so far from teaching that works of righteousness were of no avail, and that a mere internal act of faith and repentance was alone sufficient to enable a convert to obtain salvation, (as so many seem to think), distinctly and clearly pointed out throughout his epistles that, if a person truly believed in the Gospel of

Jesus Christ, he would most assuredly perform all those moral duties, and carry out those moral obligations which are enjoined by that Gospel. Indeed his teachings seem to indicate that the performance of such duties and obligations were absolutely necessary to salvation. The fact that both St. Paul and St. James use, in support of their arguments, the very same illustration of the father of the faithful, goes at once to disprove any appearance of a contradiction between the doctrines of the two inspired writers.

Let us understand that when St. Paul spoke of the works of the law which he would reject in his doctrine of justification, he was clearly referring to the Mosaic law and its ritual, while works, which St. James claims to be necessary for justification, are those moral duties enjoined by the Gospel as the fruits of a true and lively faith. It will be observed that the latter writer, when dealing with the doctrine of justification, does not speak of the "law," or of the "deeds of the law," but always uses the word "works," while on the other hand, St. Paul speaks always of the "law," or of the "deeds of the law," or the "works of the law," and never of "works" alone; thus showing clearly that the two Apostles were not referring to the same class of works at all. They had each to correct the prevailing errors of their time, and doubtless the Christians, to whom they wrote in those days, fully understood their teachings, and saw no reason to view the same as being contradictory, or at variance with each other.

The lesson then which we would seem to learn is this: We enter by faith into a state or condition of justification, but we only continue in that state by faith and works of righteousness combined, by which I intend to imply that we must bring forth the fruits of a true faith both in our characters and in our lives. It behooves us therefore to be continually watchful and careful in our conduct, lest we fall from this condition of justification or grace, owing to our own weaknesses, evil desires, and unquiet enemies, who are always on the alert to drag us down into a state of sin, misery, and spiritual death.

R. M. B. T.

WHEN any evil or impure thought so much as casts the shadow of its approaching presence on your soul, then, in all the strength of your manhood, arise and thrust it out, ere it be too late! Argue not, delay not, listen not, but hurl the loathsome whisper from you as though it were some poisonous reptile, and bid it be gone forever.

IN every pursuit of life it is the effort, the preparation, the discipline, the earnest labor that makes the valuable man in every department, not the mere fact of his occupying this or that position.

IT is not only in our open exposed deeds that we need the still voice of the silent monitor but in the small secret every-day acts of life.

THERE is nothing ignominious about poverty. It may even serve as a healthy stimulus to great spirits.

THERE is one day in the week to go to church, and there are seven to love thy neighbor as thyself.

NOTTINGHAM CONFERENCE.

A CONFERENCE of the Latter-day Saints in the Nottingham Conference District was held in the Co-operative Hall, Nottingham, Sunday, April 10, 1898. Services were held at 10:30 a.m., and 2:30 and 6 p.m.

Among those present were Elders Rulon S. Wells, Jos. W. McMurrin and Edwin F. Parry of the presidency of the European Mission; Elders Raymond McCune and Geo. Whetman of the London Conference; President T. H. Cartwright and all the Traveling Elders of the Nottingham Conference.

At the morning meeting the general authorities of the Church and the presidency of the European Mission were presented and unanimously sustained. Elder T. H. Cartwright was unanimously sustained as president of the Nottingham Conference, and the following named Elders were sustained in their respective fields of labor: A. L. Cole, H. P. Jennings, and Jos. Udall, in the Nottingham District; E. C. Rich and B. S. Wilson, in the Derby District; Geo. Paice and N. L. Gardner, in the Uttoxeter District; Stephen Parkin, in the Eastwood District. Elder Thomas Dunn was sustained as president of the Nottingham Branch; Elder James Betteridge, with Wm. Simpson and Thos. Gorton as counselors, as president of the Hucknall Branch; Elder Joseph Betteridge, with John Cuthers and Luther Buck as counselors, as president of the Arnold Branch; Elder Geo. Calladine as president of the Belper Branch.

President T. H. Cartwright read the statistical report for the past five months, as follows: Seventies, 11; Elders, 24; Priests, 10; Teachers, 8; Deacons, 14; members, 282; total, exclusive of missionaries from Zion, 338. Tracts distributed from door to door, 24,177; in open-air meetings and otherwise, 755; books sold, 9; loaned, 70; given away, 18; strangers' houses visited with first tract only, 8,195; by first invitation, 81; by re-invitation, 184; Gospel conversations, 1,125. Meetings held, hall, 263; cottage, 58; out-door, 35; Sunday Schools, 80; Mutual Improvement Association sessions, 28; Bible or theological classes, 33; Priesthood meetings, 10; Relief Society meetings held, 12; baptisms, 9; confirmations, 9; ordinations, 1; children blessed, of Church members, 5; of non-members, 1; emigrated, over eight years, 11; under eight years, 1; died, over eight years, 2.

The speakers in the morning meeting were Elders T. H. Cartwright, B. S. Wilson, Geo. Paice, Stephen Parkin, E. C. Rich, Jos. Udall and A. L. Cole.

The speakers in the afternoon meeting were Elders Henry Blackburn, D. E. Randall and Jos. W. McMurrin; and at the evening meeting Elders Geo. Whetman, Raymond McCune, Edwin F. Parry and Rulon S. Wells. The meetings were well attended, by both Saints and strangers.

Priesthood meeting was held Monday morning, April 11, 1898, at 49 Sabina Street, at which each Elder gave a brief account of his labors, and also received some valuable instruction, from Presidents Wells, McMurrin and Parry.

A. L. Cole, Clerk of Conference.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 1898.

A FRANK ADMISSION.

A RELIGIOUS paper called the *Christian Commonwealth* contains the following confession:

"The churches are just now suffering from a disease which cannot be fitly described by any word current in the English language. We have, therefore, found it necessary to coin a word in order to express definitely our meaning. The word which aptly expresses our meaning is *stereoperformance*. This word definitely describes the stereotyped formality, the artificial piety, the dreary monotony, and the heartless performance of very much that reigns in our church life and in the public services of most of the religious denominations. Hence, in pleading for a new terminology, it is absolutely necessary that we should be able to predicate an anterior new church spirit. It is no use to have good terms unless there is something with which to fill them. Without the new spirit the new terms would become as sounding brass and a clanging cymbal. In fact, they would only make "confusion worse confounded." Their pretence would be a hollow mockery, and consequently they could serve no useful purpose. At present it is lamentably true that very much of the teaching which earnest inquirers receive is wholly misleading. It is equally true that much of the ethical teachings of Christianity, which belongs especially to the Church members, is entirely neglected, while that which is taught leads to very little practical results in building up Christian character. The time has certainly come for a change with respect to these matters. Who will point out a more excellent way?"

We fully agree with the writer that there is too much of the "artificial piety, the dreary monotony, and the heartless performance of very much that reigns in church life and in the public services of most of the religious denominations." It is a condition which St. Paul predicted would be in the "last days," when men would be found "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." His advice is to "turn away" from such. They despise revelation, the very life of the true church of Christ; they ignore apostles and prophets, the foundation of the church; they "deny the Lord that bought them," by contradicting His promise that spiritual gifts should follow believers, as signs of their belief; and thereby they are bringing "upon themselves swift destruction;" they "are teaching for doctrine the commandments of men;" they "teach for hire" and "divine for money;" and "through covetousness" they "with feigned words make merchandise" of the people. But the Apostle Peter gives the assurance that "their judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

We say with the *Christian Commonwealth*: "The time has certainly come for a change with respect to these matters." Its concluding question, "who will point out a more excellent way?" may readily be answered. The way has already been pointed out. The Lord has revealed anew the true plan of salvation. The Church of Christ has been re-established upon the earth, and all its attendant blessings have been restored, and the Latter-day Saints are enjoying them. But who has faith to believe the message of the restored Gospel? It is truly as St. Peter said it would be: many have followed the pernicious ways of these false teachers, and by reason of this "the way of truth" is "evil spoken of."

DEATH OF BISHOP ELIAS MORRIS.

BISHOP ELIAS MORRIS of the fifteenth ward, Salt Lake City, Utah, died on the 17th of March, 1898. His death was the result of an accident which he received a few days before. He was 73 years of age at the time of his death. He joined the Church in 1849 and went to Utah in 1852. His occupation was that of a builder, and quite a number of the most prominent buildings in Utah were constructed under his supervision. Since 1890 he had been acting as bishop of the fifteenth ward of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion. During his long sojourn in Utah he had held many important positions in connection with home industries and manufactures. Ever since its organization he was president of the Utah Sugar company. Concerning the excellent character of Bishop Morris, the *Deseret News* says:

"Upon the whole commonwealth of Utah, and especially upon this city, the death of Bishop Elias Morris falls as a grievous calamity. In the circle of our financiers and philanthropists it makes a great break which must long remain unsupplied, for where is the man who can fill the place of Elias Morris? He was a man of great ability and resource, while his philanthropy was a proverb. Was there a scheme on foot to benefit the people? He was one of the leaders in it. Was there a struggling enterprise that promised to develop a home resource, or furnish employment for home labor? 'Go to Elias Morris, he will take stock in it and give it the benefit of his advice and influence,' was the encouraging assurance. Was there a poor man out of work, with a large and suffering family? 'Go to Elias Morris, he will give you something to do,' is what the poor man heard."

"Aside from large corporate enterprises, probably not a man has operated in this State during the past two decades who has furnished more employment to poor men than has Elias Morris. Probably not another could be named who has been more prominently identified with the development of home resources and the establishment of home enterprises than has he. He was a man of tireless energy, unceasing industry, unbounded sympathy and incorruptible integrity, and he enjoyed the esteem and confidence of all classes of the community. Men who differed with him in respect to religion and politics did not hesitate to acknowledge his high merits as a man and a citizen. To any community such a member as he is ever worth a thousand of those who by their wits, or their wealth seek profit out of other people's distresses, ignorance or cupidity."

"As a Latter-day Saint, the life of Elias Morris was the practical application and living elucidation of the principles he professed. The members of the fifteenth ward, over which he presided as Bishop, weep at the news of his death as they would at being told that their own father was dead; and like brethren of the flesh will his associates in the Priesthood mourn his departure. He lived by a standard of righteousness that was revealed from heaven, and he died with the absolute assurance that his works were pleasing unto God, and entitled him to a resurrection with the just."

POWER OF TESTIMONY.

THERE is not an individual who has heard the sound of the Gospel of salvation, the report of this work of the last days, of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and of the mission of Joseph Smith, but the Spirit of the Lord in a greater or less degree accompanied that report with power, and with the testimony of its truth, no matter as to the character of the individual, nor yet whether he admits and embraces the truth. If he has heard it in its simplicity and purity, the weight of testimony which it bears along with it, carries conviction to his mind that it may be true, although, through the influence of the world, of evil associations in life, or the instigations of the enemy of all righteousness, those convictions and impressions may be swept away, which, if exercised at the time, in sincerity, with full purpose of heart to know the truth, would have substantiated the matter to his entire satisfaction. A weight of testimony always accompanies the promulgation of the Gospel of salvation.—*Extract from a sermon delivered June 13, 1852, by Brigham Young.*

SUNDAY SCHOOLS OF THE BRITISH MISSION.

THE statistical report of the Latter-day Saint Sunday Schools in Great Britain, for the year 1897, is as follows:

Number of schools, 24; number of times school held during year, 772; number of officers and teachers, male, 66; female, 12; total, 78; average attendance, 55; number of pupils, male, 202; female, 222; total, 424; average attendance, 298; total officers, teachers and pupils, 502; number of pupils in primary department, 140; in intermediate department, 51; in higher department, 233; total cash collected from all sources, £4 6s. 5½d.; cash disbursed, £2 13s. 4d.; cash in treasury £1 13s. 1½d.

Three of the conferences were without any Sunday Schools last year, and several of the branches in the other conferences also had no schools.

ARRIVALS.—The following named missionaries from Zion arrived in Liverpool April 7, 1898, per American Line steamer *Wassland*: For the British Mission—William Nisbet, Diamondville, Wyoming; James K. Miller, Salt Lake City. For the German Mission—Francis Fullenbach, Eureka, Utah.

APPOINTMENTS.—William Nisbet and James K. Miller have been appointed to labor as Traveling Elders in the Scottish Conference.

CHANGE OF ADDRESSES.—After May 1, 1898, the address of the headquarters of the Swiss Mission will be changed from Archivstrasse 20, to Buhenburg Strasse 3, Kirchenfeld, Bern, Switzerland.

The Birmingham Conference headquarters has been changed from 42 Roland Road, Handsworth, to 320 Summer Lane, Birmingham.

MANCHESTER CONFERENCE NOTICE.—A conference of the Latter-day Saints in the Manchester Conference District will be held in the Unity Hall, King Street, Oldham, on Sunday, April 24, 1898. Meetings commence at 10:30 a.m., and at 2:30 and 6:30 p.m. A cordial invitation is extended to all.

RAYS OF LIVING LIGHT.

No. 3.

THE ATONEMENT—FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL.

Fruits of Faith.

In previous tracts of this series it has been shown that there can be but one true religion, because there is but one Supreme God, that it must be revealed from Him instead of being made by man, and that the first principle of that religion is faith, which can be made manifest only by works. Let us now see what those works are which are essential to salvation. The first fruit of faith in God and in Jesus Christ is repentance of sin. Sin against God is the transgression of His law. Conviction of sin comes through faith in God and His law. Conviction leads to humility and repentance and obedience. Sorrow for sin is not of itself true repentance, which comprehends not only regret for the past, but reformation for the future. It includes determination to forsake and refrain from sin. As the Apostle Paul expressed it, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." (II Cor. 7: 10). When the sinner is sorry because he has been found out, that is not true repentance. Grief is an element of repentance because when a believer perceives that he has broken a law of God, he feels remorse. But unless he resolves to turn away from that transgression, and not repeat it, he does not reach full repentance.

Necessity of Repentance.

"Cease to do evil, learn to do well," has been the word of God and His inspired servants through all the ages. It is a step forward in practical religion. It is absolutely necessary to salvation. Without it belief in Christ is vain. He said Himself, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise

perish." (Luke 13: 3). "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17: 30). Jesus instructed that, "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." (Luke 24: 47). The idea that people may sin against God and against humanity, and by mere belief in the merits of the Savior be absolved from all the consequences of their guilt, is one of the greatest of the many absurdities which have been grafted by the hand of man upon the tree of religion.

Object of Christ's Sacrifice.

Christ gave Himself a sacrifice to save mankind from their sins, not in their sins. His work is to redeem humanity by lifting it up to Deity. His Gospel teaches purification from sin and exaltation into the righteousness of God. The atonement wrought out on Calvary is as much misunderstood by modern divines who preach it, as were the teachings of Moses and the prophets by the sectaries who rejected the Nazarene. That atonement was for a dual purpose. First, to redeem mankind from the consequences of the original sin committed in the Garden of Eden, and second, to open the way of salvation from the actual sins committed by the posterity of Adam.

Redemption from Original Sin.

As to the first, redemption will come to all the race without effort on their part. Death came into the world in the beginning because the divine law was broken. It passed upon all the descendants of the transgressor. Christ gave Himself a sacrifice for that sin. As by one came death, so by one will come life. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15: 22). As the sons and daughters of Adam were not personally engaged in or responsible for the transgression which brought death, so they are not required to do anything in the work which shall restore them to life. The resurrection will be as broad as the death. The raising up will be co-extensive with the effects of the fall. But when through Christ the resurrection is accomplished, the dead, small and great, who are thus brought up and redeemed from the grave will be judged according to their works. (Rev. 20).

Redemption from Individual Sin.

As to the second—the actual sins of each individual, salvation will come through faith in Christ and obedience to His Gospel. Each intelligent person is accountable for his own acts. He must do what is required in order that he may be saved from his sins. The power is inherent in man to do right or to do wrong. In this he is a free agent. He can resist evil and do good, or resist good and do evil, as he elects. No matter how great may be the force of circumstances and environments, and the pressure of hereditary influences, the volition of the creature remains,

The doctrine of rewards and punishments is predicated upon individual freedom of the will and personal responsibility for its exercise. Christ has done for mankind that and that alone which they were not able to do for themselves. That which they can perform is required of every one. They can believe, they can repent, and they can receive and obey the commandments of Christ given as conditions to salvation. Unless they do this, although they will be raised from the dead and appear before the Eternal Judge, they cannot be exalted to dwell in His presence.

Salvation on Condition of Obedience.

Thus it will be seen that while Christ died, unconditionally, for the original sin by which death came into the world, he died as a propitiation for the actual sins of the world conditionally. And it was to proclaim these conditions and offer them to every creature, that He sent His Apostles forth as ministers of salvation. There is no other way to eternal life. The plan of salvation is not changed to suit the notions and opinions of man. It does not vary in different ages, nor among different nations. It is the "everlasting Gospel." The law of Moses was a temporary and imperfect law of carnal commandments, given because the Gospel had been rejected by the Israelites. It answered its purpose and passed away when the one eternal Gospel plan was restored by Jesus Christ, through whom alone mankind can be saved, and that salvation cannot be obtained except by faith in Him, which comprehends obedience to His requirements.

Remission of Sins.

It has been shown that faith is the first principle of the Gospel, and repentance—the forsaking of sin, is the second, and it is now necessary to present the third principle, which is remission of sins. The popular idea in modern Christendom is that repentance of itself brings remission of sins. That is another serious mistake. Payment of debts is not brought about by simply ceasing to get credit; determination to sin no more does not wipe out sins already committed. God is a being of order and of law. He has instituted the means whereby each sinner may receive a cleansing from the past. His laws are as uniform in the spiritual world as in the natural world; obedience to those laws is as necessary in one sphere as in the other. Remission of sins comes to the repentant believer, through baptism, when it is performed by divine direction and under divine authority.

Baptism for Remission of Sins.

Baptism for the remission of sins was preached and practiced by John, the forerunner of Jesus. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Mark 1: 4). Jesus Christ honored that baptism in person and by His teachings. He

also sent His Apostles to preach it to every creature. (Matt. 27: 19, 20, also Mark 16: 15-18). Previous to preaching that baptism, he instructed His Apostles to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endowed with power from on high. (Luke 24: 47, 49). That power was bestowed upon them on the day of Pentecost, when they were assembled in one place with one accord, and the Holy Ghost was manifested to them in visible form. To the people who gathered to hear the Apostles, forming a great multitude, Peter preached the first Gospel sermon after the resurrection of Christ, as is recorded in the 2nd chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. After testifying of the mission and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, in response to their inquiry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2: 37, 38). Three thousand people on that day received the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and were baptized for the remission of their sins.

Blood of Christ Cleanses from all Sin.

The remission of sins is given in baptism to those who believe and repent, but comes through the atonement wrought out by Jesus Christ. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22). The blood of Christ answers for the blood of the sinner who complies with the conditions required in Christ's Gospel. The benefits of that atonement are offered to all to whom the Gospel is preached, but are obtained only by those who render obedience to it. The scripture is often quoted which says, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." But this is only part of the text, and is therefore misleading. Here is the scripture as it stands: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 5-7).

Baptism by Immersion.

Baptism was instituted for the remission of sins by divine command. It is therefore essential. It is a sign of cleansing, purification, death to sin, burial from the world and resurrection to a new life in Christ Jesus. For baptism means immersion. The sprinkling or pouring of water on the body is not baptism. The ordinance of baptism preached by John, the forerunner, by Christ Himself, and by the Apostles whom He sent as

messengers, was both a burial and a birth. When Jesus was baptized by John it was in the river Jordan: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3: 13-17). Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3: 5). Jesus Himself set the example, and was born of the water and of the spirit, and though He knew no sin, had to be baptized in order to "fulfill all righteousness." When Philip baptized the man of Ethiopia, "they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." (Acts 8: 35-39). John baptized in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." (John 3: 23). Paul likened baptism to a burial and a resurrection. (See Rom. 6: 4, 5; Col. 2: 12). Peter cited the flood as a figure of baptism. (I Peter 3: 21).

Infant Baptism--Authority.

The order of the Gospel as taught by Christ and His Apostles was first faith, second repentance, third baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, with the promise of the Holy Ghost to all who complied therewith. Infant baptism is a palpable heresy. Sin is the transgression of the law. Infants cannot commit sin. Baptism must follow faith and repentance. Infants cannot exercise faith, and they have nothing to repent of even if they were capable of repentance. God never authorized any one to baptize an infant. Jesus blessed little children and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Baptism to be acceptable to God must be performed by one having actual divine authority. It must be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. No man has the right to assume that authority. It must come from God or the baptism will be void and of no effect. When properly administered it brings remission of sins, and the baptized believer becomes a new creature, stands clean before God, and is prepared to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Further explanations on this all-important subject will be given in succeeding tracts. Let the reader ponder, investigate, and enter upon the path of eternal life and salvation!

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